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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. II.

III. The third in number of our difficult tasks is to summarize the principal results, to inventory the net profits, as it were, of the development of philosophy during the nineteenth century. This task is made the more difficult by the heterogeneous nature and as yet unclassified condition of this development. With the quickening and diversifying of all kinds and means of intercourse, there has come the breaking down of national schools and idiosyncrasies of method and of thought. In philosophy, Germany, France, Great Britain, and, indeed, Italy, have come to intermingle their streams of influence; and from all these countries these streams have been flowing in upon America. In psychology, especially, as well as in all the other sciences, but also to some degree in philosophy, returning streams of influence from America have, during the last decade or two, been felt in Europe itself.

It must also be admitted that the attempts at a reconstruction of systematic philosophy which have followed the rapid disintegration of the Hegelian system, and the enormous accumulations of new material due to the extension of historical studies and of the particular sciences,—including especially the so-called ‘new psychology,’—have not as yet been fruitful of large results. In philosophy, as in art, politics, and even scientific theory, the spirit and the opportunity of the time are more favorable to the gathering of material and to the projecting of a bewildering variety of new opinions, or of old opinions put forth under new names, than to that candid, patient, and prolonged reflection and balancing of judgment, which a worthy system-building inexorably requires. The age of breaking up the old, without assimilating the new, has not yet passed away. And whatever is new, startling, huge, even monstrous, has in many quarters the seeming preference, in philosophy’s building, as in other architecture. To the confusion which reigns even in scholastic circles contri-

butions have been arriving from the outside, from philosophers like Nietzsche and from men great in literature like Tolstoi. Nor has the matter been helped by the more recent extreme developments of positivism and scepticism which, often enough, without any consciousness of their origin and without the respect for morality and religion which Kant always evinced, really go back to the critical attitude of the Kantian Philosophy.

In spite of all this, however, the last two decades or more have shown certain hopeful tendencies and notable achievements, looking toward the reconstruction of systematic philosophy. In this attempt to bring order out of confusion, to enable calm, prolonged, and reflective thinking to build into its structure the riches of the new material which the evolution of the race has secured, a place of honor ought to be given to France, where so much has been done of late to blend with clearness of style and independence of thought that calm, reflective, and critical judgment which looks all sides of human experience sympathetically but bravely in the face. In psychology, Ribot, and in philosophy, Fouillée, Renouvier, Secrétan, and others, deserve grateful recognition. No friend of philosophy can, I think, fail to recognize the probable benefits to be derived from that movement with which such names as Mach and Ostwald in Germany are connected, and which is sounding the call to the men of science to clear up the really distressing obscurity and confusion which has so long clung to their fundamental conceptions, and to examine anew the significance of their assumptions, with a view to the construction of a new and improved doctrine of the Being of the World. And if to these names we add those of the numerous distinguished investigators in psychology, as pedagogic to philosophy, and in philosophy, of Deussen, Eucken, von Hartmann, Riehl, Wundt, and others, we may well affirm that new light will continue to break forth from that country which so powerfully aroused the whole western world at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. In Great Britain, the name and works of Thomas Hill Green have influenced the attempts at a reconstruction of systematic philosophy in a manner to satisfy at one and the same time both the facts

and laws of science and the æsthetical, ethical, and religious ideals of the age in a very considerable degree. And in this attempt, both as it expresses itself in theoretical psychology and in the various branches of philosophical discipline, writers like Bradley, Fraser, Flint, Hodgson, Seth, Stout, Ward, and others, have taken a conspicuous part. Nor are there wanting in Holland, Italy, and even in Sweden and Russia, thinkers equally worthy of recognition, who are recognized, in however limited and unworthy fashion, in their own lands. The names of those in America who have labored most faithfully, and succeeded best, in this enormous task of reconstructing philosophy in a systematic way, upon a basis of history and of modern science, I do not need to mention; they are known, or they surely ought to be known, to us all.

In attempting to summarize the gains of philosophy during the last hundred years, we should remind ourselves that progress in philosophy does not consist in the final settlement, and so in the 'shelving,' of any of its great problems. Indeed, the relations of philosophy to its grounds in experience, and the very nature of its method and of its ideal, are such that its progress can never be expected to put an end to itself. But the content of the total experience of humanity has been greatly enriched during the last century; and the critical and reflective thought of trained minds has been led toward a more profound and comprehensive theory of reality, and toward a doctrine of values that will be more available for the improvement of man's political, social, and religious life.

In view of this truth respecting the limitations of systematic philosophy, I think we may hold that certain negative results, which are customarily adduced as unfavorable to the claims of philosophical progress, are really signs of improvement during the latter half of the nineteenth century. One is an increased spirit of reserve and caution, and an increased modesty of claims. This result is, perhaps, significant of riper wisdom and more trustworthy maturity. Kant believed himself to have established for philosophy a system of apodeictic conclusions which were as completely to have displaced forever the old dogmatism as

Copernicus had displaced the Ptolemaic astronomy. But the steady pressure of historical and scientific studies has made it increasingly difficult for any sane thinker to claim for any system of thinking such demonstrable validity. May we not hope that the students of the particular sciences, to whom philosophy owes so much of its enforced sanity and sane modesty, will themselves soon share freely of the philosophic spirit with regard to their own metaphysical and ethical and religious assumptions touching the ultimate Reality? Even when the recoil from the over-weening self-satisfaction and crass complacency of the earlier part of the last century takes the form of melancholy, or of acute sadness, or even of a mild despair of philosophy, I am not sure that the last state of that man is not better than the first.

In connection with this improvement, we may also note an improvement in the method of philosophy. The purely speculative method, with its intensely interesting but indefensible disregard of concrete facts and of the conclusions of the particular sciences, is no longer in favor even among the most ardent devotees and advocates of the superiority of philosophy to those sciences. At the same time, philosophy may quite properly continue to maintain its position of independent critic, as well as of docile pupil, toward the particular sciences.

In the same connection must be mentioned the hopeful fact that the last two or three decades have shown a decided improvement in the relations of philosophy toward the positive sciences. There are plain signs of late that the attitude of antagonism, or of neglect, which prevailed so largely during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, is to be replaced by one of friendship and mutual helpfulness. And, indeed, science and philosophy cannot long or greatly flourish without reciprocal aid, if by science we mean a true *Wissenschaft*, and if we mean also to base philosophy upon our total experience. For science and philosophy are really engaged upon the same task, — *to understand and to appreciate the totality of man's experience*. They, therefore, have essential and permanent relations of dependence for material, for inspiration and correction, and for other forms of helpfulness. While, then, their respective spheres

have been more clearly delimited during the last century, their interdependence has been more forcefully exhibited. Both of them have been developing a systematic exposition of the universe. Both of them desire to enlarge and deepen the conception of the Being of the World, as made known to the totality of human experience, in its unity of nature and significance. We cannot believe that the end of the nineteenth century would sustain the charge which Fontenelle made in the closing year of the seventeenth century: "*L'Académie des Sciences ne prend la nature que par petites parcelles.*" Science itself now bids us regard the universe as a dynamical unity, teleologically conceived, because in a process of evolution under the control of immanent ideas. Philosophy assumes the same point of view, rather at the beginning than at the end of defining its purpose, and so feels a certain glad leap at its heart strings, and an impulse to hold out the hand to science when it hears such an utterance as that of Poincaré: "*Ce n' est pas le mécanisme, le vrai, le seul' but ; c' est l' unité.*"

Shall we not say, then, that this double-faced but wholly true lesson has been learned : namely, that the so-called philosophy of nature has no sound foundation and no safeguard against vagaries of any sort, unless it follows the lead of the positive sciences of nature ; but that the sciences themselves can never afford a full satisfaction to the legitimate aspirations of human reason unless they, too, contribute to the philosophy of nature, — writ large and conceived of as a real, and yet ideal unity ?

That nature, as known and knowable by man, is a great artist, and that man's æsthetical consciousness may be trusted as having a certain ontological value, is the postulate properly derived from the considerations advanced in the latest, and in some respects the most satisfactory, of the three Critiques of Kant. The ideal way of looking at natural phenomena which so delighted the mind of Goethe has now been placed on broad and sound foundations by the fruitful industries of many workmen, — such as Karl Ernst von Baer and Charles Darwin, — whose morphological and evolutionary conceptions of the universe have transformed the current conceptions of cosmic processes. But the world of

physical and natural phenomena has thereby been rendered not less, but more of a cosmos, an orderly totality.

In addition to these more general but somewhat vague evaluations of the progress of philosophy during the nineteenth century, we are certainly called upon to face the question whether, after all, any advance has been made toward the more satisfactory solution of the definite problems which the Kantian criticism left unsolved. To this question I believe an affirmative answer may be given in accordance with the facts of history. It will be remembered that the first of these problems was the epistemological. Certainly no little improvement has been made in the psychology of cognition. We can no longer repeat the mistakes of Kant, either in respect to the uncritical assumptions he makes regarding the origin of knowledge in the so-called 'faculties' of the human mind, or regarding the analysis of those faculties and their interdependent relations. It is not the Scottish Philosophy alone which has led to the conclusion that, in the words of the late Professor Adamson, "What are called acts or states of consciousness are *not* rightly conceived of as having for their objects their own modes of existence as ways in which a subject is modified." And in a larger manner, both science and philosophy, in both their negations and their affirmations, and even in their points of view, have better grounds for the faith of human reason in its power progressively to master the knowledge of reality than was the case a hundred years ago. Nor has the scepticism of the same era, whether by shallow scoffing at repeated failures, or by pious sighs over the limitations of human reason, or by critical analysis of the cognitive faculties 'according to well-established principles,' succeeded in limiting our speculative pretensions to the sphere of possible experience, — in the Kantian meaning both of 'principles' and of 'experience.' But what both science and philosophy are compelled to agree upon as a common, underlying principle is this: The proof of the most fundamental presuppositions, as well as of the latest more scientifically established conclusions of both science and philosophy, is the assistance they afford in the satisfactory explanation of the totality of racial experience.

In the evolution of the ontological problem, as compared with the form in which it was left by the Critical Philosophy, the past century has also made some notable advances. To deny this would be to discredit the development of human knowledge so far as to say that we know no more about what nature is and man is than was known a hundred years ago. To say this, however, would not be to speak truth of fact. And here we may not unnaturally grow somewhat impatient with that metaphysical fallacy which places an impassable gulf between reality and experience. No reality is, of course, cognizable or believable by man which does not, somehow, show its presence in his total experience. But no growth of experience is possible without involving increase of knowledge respecting reality. For reality is no absent and dead, or statical *Ding-an-sich*. Cognition itself is a commerce of realities. And are there not plain signs that the more thoughtful men of science are becoming less averse to the recognition of the truth of ontological philosophy: namely, that the deeper meaning of their own studies is grasped only when they recognize that they are ever face to face with what they call energy and we call will; and with what they call laws and we call mind, as significant of the progressive realization of immanent ideas? This ultimate reality is so profound that neither science nor philosophy will ever sound all its depths, and so comprehensive as more than to justify all the categories of both.

Probably, on the whole, there has been less progress made toward a satisfactory solution of the problems offered by the value-judgments of ethics and religion, in the form in which these problems were left by the Critical Philosophy. The century has illustrated the truth of Falckenberg's statement: "In periods which have given birth to a sceptical philosophy, one never looks in vain for the complementary phenomenon of mysticism." Twice during the century the so-called 'faith-philosophy,' or philosophy of feeling, has been borne to the front, to raise a bulwark against the advancing hosts of agnostics, — occasioned in the first period by the negations of the Kantian criticism, and in the second by the positive conclusions of the physical and biological sciences.

This form of protesting against the neglect or disparagement of important factors which belong to men's æsthetical, ethical, and religious experience, is reasonable and must be heard. But the extravagances with which these neglected factors have been posited and appraised, to the neglect of the more definitively scientific and strictly logical, is to be deplored. The great work before the philosophy of the present age is the reconciliation of the historical and scientific conception of the universe with the legitimate sentiments and ideals of art, morality, and religion. But surely neither rationalism nor 'faith-philosophy' is justified in pouring out the living child with the muddy water of the bath.

IV. The attempt to survey the present situation of philosophy, and to predict its immediate future, is embarrassed by the fact that we are all immersed in it, are a part of its spirit and present form. But if nearness has its embarrassments, it has also its benefits. Those who are amidst the tides of life may know better, in a way, how these tides are tending and what is their present strength, than do those who survey them from distant, cool, and exalted heights. "Für jeden einzelnen bildet der Vater und der Sohn eine greifbare Kette von Lebensereignungen und Erfahrungen." The very intensely vital and formative but unformed condition of systematic philosophy, — its protoplasmic character, — contains promises of new life. If we may believe the view of Hegel, that the systematizing of the thought of any age marks the time when the peculiar living thought of that age is passing into a period of decay, we may certainly claim for our present age the prospect of a prolonged vitality.

The nineteenth century has left us with a vast widening of the horizon, — outward into space, backward in time, inward toward the secrets of life, and downward into the depths of reality. With this there has been an increase in the profundity of the conviction of the spiritual unity of the race. In the consideration of all its problems in the immediate future and in the coming century, — so far as we can see forward into this century, — philosophy will have to reckon with certain marked characteristics of the human spirit which form at the same time inspiring stimuli and limiting conditions of its endeavors and achieve-

ments. Chief among these are the greater and more firmly established principles of the positive sciences, and the prevalence of the historical spirit and method in the investigation of all manner of problems. These influences have given shape to a conception which, although it is as yet by no means in its final or even in a thoroughly self-consistent form, is destined powerfully to affect our philosophical as well as our scientific theories. This conception is that of development. But philosophy, considered as the product of critical and reflective thinking upon the more ultimate problems of nature and human life, is itself a development. And it is now, more than ever before, a development interdependently connected with all the other great developments.

Philosophy, in order to adapt itself to the spirit of the age, must welcome and cultivate the freest critical inquiry into its own methods and results, and must cheerfully submit itself to the demand for evidence which has its roots in the common and essential experience of the race. Moreover, the growth of the spirit of democracy which, on the one hand, is distinctly unfavorable to any system of philosophy whose tenets and formulas seem to have only an academic validity, or a merely esoteric value, and which, on the other hand, requires for its satisfaction a more tenable, helpful, and universally applicable theory of life and reality, cannot fail, in my judgment, to influence favorably the development of philosophy. In the union of the speculative and the practical ; in the harmonizing of the interests of the positive sciences, with their judgments of fact and law, and the interests of art, morality, and religion, with their value-judgments and ideals ; in the synthesis of the truths of realism and idealism, as they have existed hitherto and now exist in separateness or antagonism ; in a union that is not accomplished by a shallow eclecticism but by a sincere attempt to base philosophy upon the totality of human experience, — in such a union as this must we look for the real progress of philosophy in the coming century.

Just now there seem to be two somewhat heterogeneous and not altogether well-defined tendencies toward the reconstruction of systematic philosophy, both of which are powerful and represent

real truths conquered by ages of intellectual industry and conflict. These two, however, need to be internally harmonized in order to obtain a satisfactory statement of the development of the last century. They may be called the evolutionary and the idealistic. The one tendency lays emphasis on mechanism, the other on spirit. Yet it is most interesting to notice how many of the early workmen in the investigation of the principle of the conservation and correlation of energy took their point of departure from distinctly teleological and spiritual conceptions. "I was led," said Colding, — to take an extreme case, — at the Natural Science Congress at Innsbruck, 1869, "to the idea of the constancy of natural forces by the religious conception of life." And even Moleschott, in his *Autobiography*, posthumously published, declares: "I, myself, was well aware that the whole conception might be converted; for since all matter is a bearer of force, endowed with force or penetrated with spirit, it would be just as correct to call it a spiritualistic conception." On the other hand, the modern, better-instructed idealism is much inclined, both from the psychological and from the more purely philosophical points of view, to regard with duly profound respect all the facts and laws of that mechanism of reality, which certainly is not merely the dependent construction of the human mind functioning according to a constitution that excludes it from reality, but is rather the ever increasingly more trustworthy revealer of reality.

This tendency to a union of the claims of both realism and idealism is profoundly influencing the solution of each one of those problems which the Kantian criticism left to the philosophy of the nineteenth century. In respect of the epistemological problem, philosophy, as I have already said, is not likely again to repeat the mistakes either of Kant or the dogmatism which his criticism so effectually overthrew. It was a wise remark of the physician Johann Benjamin Erhard in a letter dated May 19, 1794, *à propos* of Fichte: "The philosophy which *proceeds* from a *single* fundamental principle, and pretends to deduce everything from it, is and always will remain a piece of artificial sophistry; only that philosophy which *ascends* to the highest principle and exhibits everything else in perfect harmony with it,

is the true one." This at least ought, one would say, to have been made clear by the century of discussion over the epistemological problem, since Kant. You cannot *deduce* the idea from the reality, or reality from the idea. The problem of knowledge is not, as Fichte held in the form of a fundamental assumption, an alternative of this sort. The idea *and* reality are, the rather, already there, and to be recognized as in a living unity, in every cognitive experience. Psychology is constantly adding something toward the problem of cognition as a problem in synthesis; and is thus in a way contributing to the better scientific understanding of the philosophical postulate which is the confidence of human reason in its ability, by the harmonious use of all its powers, progressively to reach a better and fuller knowledge of reality.

The ontological problem will necessarily always remain the unsolved, in the sense of the very incompletely solved, problem of philosophy. But as long as human experience develops, and as long as philosophy bestows upon experience the earnest and candid efforts of reflecting minds, the solution of the ontological problem will be approached, but never fully reached. That 'Being of the World' which Kant, in the negative and critical part of his work, left as an *X*, unknown and unknowable, the last century has filled with a new and far richer content than it ever had before. Especially has this century changed the conception of the unity of the universe in such manner that it can never return again to its ancient form. On the one hand, this unity cannot be made comprehensible in terms of any one scientific or philosophical principle or law. Science and philosophy are both moving farther and farther away from the hope of comprehending the variety and infinite manifoldness of the Absolute in terms of any one side or aspect of man's complex experience. But, on the other hand, the confidence in this essential unity is not diminished, but is the rather confirmed. As humanity itself develops, as the self-hood of man grows in the experience of the world which is its own environment, and of the world within which is its own true self, humanity may reasonably hope to win an increased, and increasingly valid, cognition of the being of the world as the Absolute Self.

Closely connected, and in a way essentially identical with the ontological problem, is that of the origin, validity, and rational value of the ideals of humanity. May it not be said that the nineteenth century transfers to the twentieth an increased interest in, and a heightened appreciation of, the so-called practical problems of philosophy? Science and philosophy certainly ought to combine — and are they not ready to combine? — in the effort to secure a more nearly satisfactory understanding and solution of the problems afforded by the æsthetical, ethical, and religious sentiments and ideals of the race. For philosophy this combination means that it will be more fruitful than ever before in promoting the uplift and betterment of mankind. The fulfillment of this practical mission of philosophy involves the application of its conceptions and principles to education, politics, morals, as matter of law and of custom, and to religion, as matter both of rational faith and of the conduct of life.

How, then, can this brief and imperfect sketch of the outlines of the development of philosophy in the nineteenth century better come to a close, than by words of encouragement and of exhortation as well? There are, in my judgment, the plainest signs that the somewhat too destructive and even nihilistic tendencies of the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century have reached their limit; that the strife of science and philosophy, and of both with religion, is lessening and is being rapidly displaced by the spirit of mutual fairness and reciprocal helpfulness; and that reasonable hopes of a new and splendid era of reconstruction in philosophy may be entertained. For I cannot agree with the dictum of a recent writer on this subject, that “the sciences are coming less and less to admit of a synthesis, and not at all of a synthetic philosophy.”

On the contrary, I hold that, with an increased confidence in the capacity of human reason to discover and validate the most secret and profound, as well as the most comprehensive of truths, philosophy may well put aside some of its shyness and hesitancy, and may resume more of that audacity of imagination, sustained by ontological convictions, which characterized its work during the first half of the nineteenth century. And if the latter half

of the twentieth century does for the constructions of the first half of the same century, what the latter half of the nineteenth century did for the first half of that century, this new criticism will only illustrate the way in which the human spirit makes every form of its progress.

Therefore a summons of all helpers, in critical but fraternal spirit, to this work of reconstruction, for which two generations of enormous advance in the positive sciences have gathered new material, and for the better accomplishment of which both the successes and the failures of the philosophy of the nineteenth century have prepared the men of the twentieth century, is the winsome and imperative voice of the hour.

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